

**VSH Futures
Peer Support Program Development Workgroup**

March 12th, 2008

10:00 to 12:30

Draft Minutes

<u>Next Meeting:</u>	Wednesday, April 9th, 2008, 10:00 am to 12:30 PM Vermont Technical College, Langevin House, Room 101, Randolph, VT
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Present: Steven Morgan
Linda Corey, Chair
Kitty Gallagher
Pamela Corcoran
Jean New
Xenia Williams
Catherine Mayo
Zachary Hughes
Ed Paquin

Staff: Nick Nichols

Review of Minutes

- Two errors in last month's minutes were noted. The attendance list should have included Greg Burbo, and it should not have included Catherine and Zack, who were not present
- The minutes were approved with those changes.

Check-In Regarding Last Meeting

Nick asked the group members for feedback on the last meeting. Comments included:

- It was a little overwhelming
- It was OK.
- Some of the meeting was awkward, but it was OK because we were doing important work. There was some difficulty and confusion in discussing what the process should be for developing the program.
- I felt proud with what we were able to produce.
- I felt OK with the process.
- At times it was hard to participate in the discussion because other people were jumping in and not giving time and space for everyone to talk.

- At times the group was jumping back to explain information that was discussed/reviewed at an earlier meeting, and this was frustrating for some folks who wanted to spend time moving forward.

The group generated suggestions on how to improve the meetings based on this feedback.:

- Group members should be more aware of letting other people speak and participate.
- Zack recommends a buddy system for newer members to help make sure they have information that might have been shared when they were not present.
- The workgroup should have a separate time so visitors/friends have specific time for public comment
- Members of the workgroup who have been participating for a while could offer to connect with newer members during the breaks to give information on the history of what has been covered by the group.
- The group should make sure to spend some time to review what the ground rules are.
- We can have newsprint taped to the wall to write down “parking lot” issues that may not pertain to a current discussion but do need to be discussed at some point.
- Nick can include a parking lot section in the minutes that he records and projects onto the wall during the meeting.

Next Steps to Develop the Peer Crisis Respite Program

At the last meeting, Nick had been asked to present the work completed by the workgroup to Beth Tanzman, who is the Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health and the director of the Futures Project. Based on his discussion with Beth, he posed several questions to the workgroup to discuss. These questions included:

- “Does the Workgroup think we should use VPS as the sponsoring organization for the Peer Crisis Respite Program, or should we put it out to bid?”
- Should we hire someone to act as project developer and then hire a program director, or should these positions be combined?
- How should we go about choosing who the program developer is? Does the Workgroup have someone they would like to use as a “Project Developer” who would write a detailed project description (budget, location, staffing, program philosophy, etc.), or should we go through a hiring process?

Questions and Comments regarding these questions included:

- If VPS was the sponsoring organization, would they do the hiring for the positions?
- The program should probably have board of directors and a program director who would be involved in hiring the staff for the program.
- Would it make sense to have the program eventually become an independent entity with its own 501 © 3 status? There might be some advantages to this, though we might want to have VPS act as a “pass-through” that handles administrative duties like payroll.

- Another model to consider is the establishment of a completely independent program like Another Way. This program receives funding directly from DMH and does not have a parent organization. This only works because Another Way established itself as 501 C (3) many years ago.
- The program could also be established as a “for-profit” entity.
- After additional discussion, **the Workgroup voted to recommend that VPS be approached to act as the sponsoring organization.**
- Linda recommended that the project occur in two phases. A project developer should be hired first, and then, once the program has been designed, a program director could be hired. The project developer may be good at development work but not good at managing a program.
- Xenia commented that there are different skill sets required between planning and running a program. Someone might be good at developing and planning but they might not be good at managing people and program.
- Kitty suggested that a subgroup be formed to focus on hiring a person to do the program development. We can worry about hiring a program director later.
- Nick commented that the program developer who is hired could contract out for some of the planning details (e.g. assessing local zoning rules) as needed.
- Zack recommended that program developer should report back to committee on the development of the plans on a regular basis.
- Catherine commented that at the Living Room Project, the board of that project chose to hire two facilitators. She wondered if we should hire one or multiple people.
- Kitty recommended that we should hire one person who would work collaboratively with other people.
- Ed agreed that it would be good to have one person who would act as lead and that this person act only as developer. The decision about hiring a program director should come later.
- Members of the group asked if the person should be part time or full time, and how much the person should be paid. Linda recommended that this could be open-ended depending on the person, their availability, and their experience.
- The workgroup asked Nick to find out if there was a set budget of how much could be spent on program development?
- Xenia recommended that people should “put out their antennae” regarding possible locations. There is currently an empty location in Barre that Xenia could envision as a future location for the program!
- Linda added that we may be able to get someone to donate a lot of what is needed for the facility.
- The workgroup approved the following motion:
The Futures Peer Support Program Development Workgroup recommends that a project developer be hired within next 8 weeks. The Project Developer will be asked to develop a peer crisis respite program proposal by October 2008 that incorporates the work done by the workgroup to date. The salary of the developer will be negotiated based on the experience and proposal of the applicant.

- Nick will put together a draft job description and possible payment details for the workgroup to review and approve. Nick will try to schedule a conference call in about two weeks for members of the workgroup to discuss the draft proposal.

Updates

- Linda mentioned that Lenora Kimball and Shery Mead will be doing a peer training in April on peer crisis respite/support. Linda asked the workgroup if Vermont should send several peers to this training event. The workgroup decided that perhaps one or two Vermonters should attend, but that it was too early in the development of the peer crisis respite program to send a lot of peers to this program. The training is April 21st – 25th.
- At 7pm at Vermont College on March 22nd there will be a presentation called “Crazy.” It is a presentation on one woman’s experience (Gail Marlene Schwartz) with mental illness. The presentation will be followed by a panel discussion including other consumers. VSA Arts Judy Chalmer is a person you can contact about scheduling the presentation.
- On March 20th Steve will be doing a presentation on peer support at Vermont State Hospital.
- Safe Haven just celebrated its 10-year anniversary.
- The peer-run space called the Living Room at the Clara Martin Center has officially opened!
- Kitty is working to sponsor a one-day training on May 1st for peer warm lines. It will be at the Howe Center from 10:00 am – 3pm. This will be specifically geared toward people who are already participating on a warm line.
- Steve mentioned that the Springfield Peer Support Recovery Training is finalized, and peers from the recovery center in Springfield have started the training. The training occurs over six months and has a lot of great information.
- A group of White River Junction peers are meeting to develop a peer-run space that will be located in the old White River Junction CRT offices.